

## The Style Invitational

Week 544: You Gotta Have Heart



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Okay, okay, we screwed it up, We've caused eternal pain. But hey, today it's Valentine's— So let's go raise some Cain.**

**This week's contest:** The approach of Valentine's Day can make even The Empress— that bastion of icy, tut-tut unsentimentality—just a teensy bit goopy. Not that she would ever send a valentine herself, so help her indulge vicariously: Write us some valentine sentiments from one particular person (real or fictional) to another, as in the example above. They don't have to be in verse.

First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins an amazing Valentine's garment: a remarkable thong teddy from Frederick's of Hollywood in a tuxedo motif, if your idea of a tuxedo includes spaghetti straps, frilly lace trim and two little black tails to hang over your bare backside. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt in Ultra Valentine Red. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after new Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312 or by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com). U.S. mail entries are not

accepted. Deadline is Monday, Feb. 16. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or you risk being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

**Report from Week 540**, in which we asked for news or historical events to be presented in the "Rocky and Bullwinkle" "A, or B" format of groaner puns or other halfwitticisms. This assignment was attacked with great fervor by a few people who bombarded The Empress with entries all week long, including a couple who must have majored in Obscure European History at Wassamatta U. (the 1566 Compromise of Breda?).

◆ Third runner-up: 1975— **Metric Conversion Act passed by Congress: Take Us to Your Liter, or Tens Anyone?** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ Second runner-up: 2001— **Bush's tax cuts: Deficit Attention Disorder, or No Rothschild Left Behind** (Andrew Elby, Arlington)

◆ First runner-up, the winner of the plain old boring BobStaake.com coffee mug: 1066— **The Norman Conquest: Saxon Violence, or Let Me Run This Bayeux** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ And the winner of the Inker: 1854— **The Charge of the Light Brigade: Fools Speed Ahead, or Is That Your Final Lance, Sir?** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

◆ **A timeline of Honorable Mentions:** 65 million years ago: **Extinction of the dinosaurs: Sic Semper Tyrannosaurus, or You're Looking Awfully Paleo** (Danny Bravman, Potomac)

c. 1250 B.C.: **The Exodus: A Parting Wave, or I Just Dropped a Couple Tablets** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

c. 1200 B.C.: **Trojan War: The Last Time I Saw Paris, or Beware of Gifts Bearing Greeks** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

c. 900 B.C.: **The judgment of Solomon: Split Decision, or Halving My Baby** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

431-404 B.C.: **Peloponnesian Wars: A Tale of Thucydides, or Hellas-a-Poppin'** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

31 B.C.: **Octavian at the Battle of Actium: Surrender Unto Caesar, or Let's Win One for Agrippa!** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

1773: **The Boston Tea Party: Of Tea I Fling, or Hurl Grey** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

1779: **France comes to the aid of America against Britain: Lafayette You, Not With You, or Burgoyne to Be Sorry** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

1814: **Napoleon is exiled to Elba: Corporal Punishment, or All This for a Lousy Palindrome?** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1836: **The Alamo: Mission Impossible, or Texas Toast** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

1846: **The Donner Party disaster: Family Dinner, or Meat: The Parents** (Bird Waring, New York)

1846-48: **The Mexican-American War: Juarez Hell, or Tijuana Make Something of It?** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

late 1800s: **Liberia adopts slavery of native tribes: On the American Plan, or It Takes One to Own One** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1907-14: **The digging of the Panama Canal: Sedimental Journey, or The Wicked Ditch of the West** (Miles Townes, St. Andrews, Scotland)

1920-28: **Paavo Nurmi wins Olympic gold: Lapps the Field, or Nice Finnish Guys Last** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

1929-39: **The Great Depression: American Idle, or Stock in First Gear** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

1933: **Roosevelt declares a Bank Holiday: A Cure for the Runs, or Do Not Collect \$200** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1935: **Release of the game Monopoly: Now Boarding, or Playing the Race Car** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1937: **The Hindenburg explosion: Dead Zeppelin, or Light My Flier** (Dave Ferry, Purvis, Miss.; Russell Beland, Springfield)

1944: **The D-Day invasion: Strife's a Beach, or Did Juno We Were Coming?** (Michael Denyszyn, New York)

1957: **Introduction of the Edsel: Building a Car Bomb, or The Lemon Doesn't Fall Far From the Tree** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1962: **The Cuban Missile Crisis: Them Ain't Cigars, or Armageddon Nervous** (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

1968: **The Soviets invade Czechoslovakia: Croaking Prague, or Dubcek's Bounced** (Gordon Labow, Glenelg)

1969: **The moon landing: One Giant Schlep, or Neil Before Me** (Buzz Aldrin, Los Angeles) (Cliff Cummins, Hyattsville)

1971: **Admission of People's Republic of China to the United Nations: Peking Into the Naked City, or A China in the Bull Shop** (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

1996: **The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal: Secret Service, or Insert Bill Here** (David Iscoe, Washington)

1996: **Clinton explains the situation: Her and Her Big Mouth, or I'm Incurably Semantic** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

1999: **Bob Dole pitches Viagra: Where There's a Pill, There's a Way, or I'm as Horny as Kansas in August** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

2001: **The Enron scandal: Piling It Up Fastow and Fastow, or A Man Is Known By the Company He Keeps Looting** (Roy Ashley, Washington)

2003: **Richard Grasso resigns: The Bucks Stop Here, or NYSE Seein' Ya** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

2003: **U.S. handling of postwar Iraq: Peace-Poor Planning, or Throwing the Baby Out With the Bath Water** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

2003: **Michael Jackson arrested: Goodbye, Mr. Chimps, or The King of Perp** (Mary Ann Henningsen, Hayward, Calif.)

2004: **Style Invitational succession: Czar He Goes, or Beyond the Call of Doody** (Sue Lin Chong, Washington; Greg Krakower, New York)

Join The Empress online Tuesday at noon on [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

## MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

### Parental Guidance Suggested

**W**hat kind of parent would attempt to interfere in a grown child's romance?

A tyrant unwilling to let the child lead his or her own life? A bigot incapable of judging people as individuals? A hypocritical moralist with outdated prejudices? A snob who cares more about wealth or social status than true love? A failure who expects the child to compensate for life's disappointments?

Perhaps some of these types have been silenced by the barrage of social wisdom that, for some decades now, has been warning parents against the hazards of speaking their minds to their children. Miss Manners wouldn't count on it, however. It seems that the more questionable the motives, the more likely relatives are to persist in issuing unfavorable opinions laced with warnings and threats.

It is the good parents who are intimidated. They have been told that if they are "judgmental" about what their children are doing, their children will stop telling them what they are doing. Many also believe that the world has changed so much that they are incapable of judging anything to do with their children's lives. So they hope to coax confidences with the advance assurance that they will not show disapproval.

Why it is an advantage to children of any age to have parents with no apparent judgment is not clear to Miss Manners.

But this restraint is practiced especially strictly when it comes to the child's love life. It is reinforced by the realization that anything negative said about a near-stranger may turn out to be a permanent insult lobbed at an in-law—and an in-law who has your child's and grandchildren's first loyalty.

Therefore, "whatever makes you happy" is about all the guidance the offspring of such parents can expect when they are contemplating marriage. At a stage in life when they are befogged by Eros, they are thus deprived of the views of the people who know them best, who have a long-term view of partnership unimaginable to the young, and who do in fact selflessly want them to be happy.

Miss Manners figures that there must be something between silence and insult—something that parents can do that is both tactful and useful. The

goal here is not to thwart the child's happiness, but to help him or her find out what it is.

Some questions that might be asked:

What is it that made you fall in love? Do you miss not seeing other people? What does he or she do when upset? How does he or she behave when upset with you? What do you talk about other than love? What do you like to do together (other than . . .)?

There may be no right answers to these questions, but there certainly are wrong ones. And there is nothing like a gentle, parental "Oh, dear, that might be a problem later" to make a child listen to his or her own wrong answers.

**Dear Miss Manners:**

**It seems my friends are quite willing to meet for lunch, or to do something specific, but I have no luck at all in getting them simply to "visit."**

**"Visiting" used to be a popular way to see and hear about your friends. It was certainly superior to a telephone call or today's e-mail. Not all of my friends have hectic lives. And I am an interesting person and a very good listener. (I am a retired psychologist.) Do you have any suggestions as to how to encourage the lost art of visiting?**

Mention the refreshments. Tea, drinks, coffee, popcorn, dessert—Miss Manners doesn't care what, and neither do your guests. But these are the words we now use to delineate the routine of the short one-on-one visit, which guests need to know.

The old-fashioned "visit" of which you speak had a strict form, with a 15-minute limitation. It survives only in the hospital visit, where your guests ought to know that they should not prolong the stay or help themselves to the chocolates you have been sent.

*Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at [MissManners@unitedmedia.com](mailto:MissManners@unitedmedia.com) or mail to United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.*

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## TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Jeraldine Saunders

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

You are brimming with confidence and are ready to take on new challenges. This is a great week to focus on business and get caught up at work. New friends and love interests may pop suddenly into the picture but are not guaranteed to last.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

You feel a surge of confidence and are focused on close relationships. Do your best to stay on an even keel, and don't jump to conclusions about intimate encounters. All that glitters is not gold, and sometimes the tried and true may be the best.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**

This is a good day to start new projects that require endurance and long-term attention. Associates may be a bit touchy and easily offended, so use your best manners for the next day or so and avoid arguments.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**

You feel like taking the bull by the horns and getting things done but may be distracted by petty squabbles or too much chitchat. Your energies may simply rub people the wrong way, so work hard behind the scenes. Concentrate on home and social life, where you shine.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**

It's good day to start new projects, and you glow with confidence. Too much chatter about inessentials can cause discord, however, so remain sensitive to the moods and needs of others.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**

This is a good day to set new goals and recharge your personal batteries. You sense that a change is in the air and that the future can be brighter. Take practical steps to ensure that your life runs smoothly; don't brood over the past.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**

You are fearless and confident, ready to take charge of anything and everything in your path. Remain sensitive to

others, and be careful not to tread on someone else's territory, as friction is the likely result.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**

This is a good time to start a new task or set goals for the future as there is a sense of determination in the air. You are reminded of your blessings and good fortune this week, but you may get bogged down in petty details.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**

It is much easier to concentrate on the things in your life that are going well than to be distracted by the things that aren't. Apply yourself fully to the areas you feel confident about, and have fun with the people you are most comfortable with.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

This is a good week to start something new, but you must be careful to avoid stepping on the toes of others who may feel threatened by your intensity of purpose. Avoid sharp words on the home front, and be considerate of others.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

There is positive energy in the air, so you believe you can take on anything and anyone. You are ready to take a gamble, but it is wise to listen to the advice of trusted or more experienced friends before jumping into action.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

You are at peace with the world and appreciative of your personal horn of plenty, even though worries lurk in the background. Start projects that require determination to ensure that your plate remains full.

**IF FEB. 8 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY:** You are a searcher after truth, but you never allow the quest to carry you away on flights of fancy. Although you are open to new ideas, you are also extremely practical and wait to see how those around you can benefit from changes to the status quo before changing your own direction. Once you are convinced that innovation will bring some good, you are tenacious in following the path of your beliefs.

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## DEAR ABBY

**Dear Abby:**

My best friend, "Bette," is one of the nicest, smartest teens you'll ever meet. I enjoy her company, we get along great, and we have a lot in common. She's also my role model, since I'm two years younger than she is. (I skipped a couple of grades.)

Recently, Bette has been smoking weed and encouraging me to try it. I am very against smoking. I'm afraid Bette might be doing the wrong thing. She says it's okay because she does it only a little bit. How can I persuade her to stop? Should I even try? Will I be ruining a great friendship?

*Need Help in Georgia*

You appear to be more mature than your friend. Not only is pot smoking generally unhealthy; it impairs your judgment. Marijuana can affect memory and the choices smokers make while under the influence. It is also illegal.

It is important that you understand that people change as they mature—or fail to mature. If Bette continues on this path, she may eventually begin spending more time with other kids who smoke pot. It could affect her grades and her participation in sports and other interests. You may have less and less in common. So start developing friendships with other students whose interests and goals are similar to yours and continue moving forward on your own wholesome path.

By all means, try to persuade Bette to stop; as her friend, it is the right thing to do. But she is ultimately responsible for her own behavior—or misbehavior—and you have to protect your own future.

**Dear Abby:**

You printed a letter from a 13-year-old girl whose father is deployed in the Middle East. She was worried about her mother's depression. You wisely suggested that the daughter seek assistance from a trusted adult who knows her mother and can encourage her to talk to a doctor. I would like to offer some additional suggestions:

Where's Richard Thompson? He's moved to the Saturday editions of Style. Same razor-sharp wit and cunningly wicked cartooning, only now on Page 3. Check yesterday's paper and pick up Style on Saturdays for your weekly helping of "Richard's Poor Almanac."

Next Week: **Called Up the River, or Call of Confusion**

Amén to that! And thank you for offering this valuable information to the spouses of our military personnel.

**Dear Abby:**  
I am 21 years old and have been thin all my life. But for the past year, I have been getting up during the night and eating. Sometimes the next morning I don't even know what I ate the night before! I have also noticed that I am gaining weight. Please help.

*Nocturnal Eater*

Discuss this with your doctor. If you're doing this while not fully awake, it may be a symptom of a sleep disorder.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.*

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